

A Cognitive Account of the Constraints on Possessor-Ascension Constructions

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This paper discusses the proper characterization of possessor ascension (PA) constructions in Korean and other languages, pointing out the difficulty of formulating constraints either syntactically or in terms of well-defined semantic roles. It is also argued that describing the constraint of possessor ascension process simply as possessive relationship is not specific enough to characterize the possible condition in which possessor ascension can actually take place. Thus, we propose a cognitive account that explains the constraints of PA constructions semantico-pragmatically. The proposed analysis stresses the importance of the 'affectedness' of the possessor and lays greater emphasis on the 'contiguity' between the possessor and the possessed over the 'inalienability' of the possessed. The crucial factor in PA process is whether or not the possessor is cognitively contiguous with the possessed object in an event, and the possessor is thought to be affected by the event. The constraints of affectedness and contiguity explains more accurately the PA process than inalienability.

1. Introduction

The term "Possessor Ascension" has been used to refer to any construction in which the possessor NP is "promoted" to the status of direct object or dative, while the possessed NP is "demoted" to the status of some sort of oblique phrase (Fox 1981 : 323). Consider such familiar examples from English, German, and French:

- (1) a. I kicked him in the leg.
 b. I kissed him on the cheek.
- (2) German (Shibatani 1994 : 462):
 - a. Man hat ihm den Arm gebrochen.
 he-Dat arm-Acc broken
 "They broke his arm."

- b. Sie wäscht dem Paul die Haare.
 wash Paul-Dat Hair-Acc
 “She washes Paul’s hair.”

(3) French (Shibatani 1994 : 462)

- a. On lui a casse le bras.
 he-Dat arm-Acc
 “They broke his arm.”
- b. Elle lave les cheveux a Paul.
 hair-Acc Paul-Dat
 “She washes Paul’s hair.”

Examples of Possessor Ascension can be found in many languages.¹ In Spanish, for example, such constructions employ the Dative pronoun to indicate the possessor, in place of the usual possessive pronoun, while the possessed object is expressed with the definite article (Fox 1981 : 324):

- (4) a. Le seco las lagrimas
 her he-dried the tears
 “He dried her tears.”
- b. Le veo las enaguas
 her I-saw the peticoat
 “I saw her petticoat on her.”

In Korean, the possessor NP can be promoted to the status of direct object marked with the accusative, while the possessed NP still remains marked with the accusative. As a result, we can have “double object” or “double accusative” constructions consisting of two accusative-marked NP. Following Palmer (1994), we call the first accusative-marked NP ‘primary object’ and the second accusative-marked NP ‘secondary object.’ Consider the case marking alternations in the following examples:

- (5) a. John i Mary uy son ul ttayli- ess - ta.
 Nom Poss hand Acc hit-Past-Dec
 “John hit Mary’s hand.”
- b. John i Mary lul son ul ttayli - ess - ta.
 Nom Acc hand Acc hit-Past-Dec
 “John hit Mary on the hand.”

¹ For detailed data, see Fox (1981).

- (6) a. John i Mary uy tung ul mil - ess - ta.
 Nom Poss back Acc push-Past-Dec
 "John pushed Mary's back."
 b. John i Mary lul tung ul mil - ess - ta.
 Nom Acc back Acc push-Past-dec
 "John pushed Mary on the back."

In possessor ascension process above, the possessor, *Mary* marked with the possessive particle *-uy*, becomes an object marked with the accusative marker. As a consequence, the promoted possessor is interpreted as an affected entity.²

The possessor ascension under discussion in this paper is a device to promote a participant from the status of a possessor to that of affected object. We would therefore expect clauses that allow 'possessor ascension' to be high in the degree of transitivity, since a highly affected object means high transitivity. As seen in (1) through (6), possessor ascension clauses often contain highly transitive verbs such as 'hit,' 'grasp,' 'cut' and 'break,' while only rarely do they allow such low transitive verbs like 'look' or 'listen'. They also prefer animate nouns as the ascended objects, as it will be shown later. These facts would certainly seem to be consistent with Hopper and Thompson's (1980) Transitivity Hypothesis.

This paper investigates the constraints that allow possessor-ascension in Korean, and we would like to propose a cognitive account that explains the constraints of PA constructions semantico-pragmatically. As it turns out, the concepts of 'affectedness' and 'contiguity' are the most important factors to determine the allowance of PA constructions in Korean. This cognitive account also explains other relevant constructions such as "retained object passive constructions" in Korean.

²On the other hand, some linguists (S.J. Park 1985, Chun 1986, O'Grady 1991 among others) take as 'possessor ascension' the following genitive-nominative alternation, in which the possessor is converted into the subject:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. Mary-uy elkwl-i yeyppu-ta.
Gen face-Nom pretty
"Mary's face is pretty." | b. Mary-ka elkwl-i yeyppu-ta.
Nom
"Mary is pretty in the face." |
|--|---|

However, we do not include this kind of alternation in the discussion of possessor-ascension in this paper.

2. Grammatical Status of the Ascended Possessor

In possessor-ascension constructions, it is the animate possessor NP, not the possessed NP which may be promoted to the subject of the passive: Once the possessor NP is ascended to the object position, it behaves like a 'primary object' so that it can be promoted to the subject of the passive.

- (6) b'. Mary-ka John-eykey tung-ul mil-li-ess-ta.
 Nom Dat back-Acc push-Pass-Past-Dec
 "Mary was pushed on the back by John."

On the other hand, the original object, the body-part object, behaves like a 'secondary object' that cannot be promoted to the subject of the passive (cf. Palmer 1994).

In support of the direct objecthood of the possessor, O'Grady (1991) notes Chun's (1986) arguments that this element can be associated with a floated quantifier (as in (7)), can be promoted to subject by Passivisation (as in (8)) and can undergo Plain Topicalization (as in (9)).

- (7) Floated Quantifier associated with 'Ascended' NP:

- a. Kay-ka haksayng-ul seys-ul tali-lul mul-ess-ta.
 dog-Nom student-Acc three-Acc leg-Acc bite-Past-Dec
 "The dog bit three students on the leg."
 b. Mary-ka namu-lul seys-ul kaci-lul call-ass-ta.
 Nom tree-Acc three-acc branch-Acc cut-Past-Dec
 "Mary cut three tree's branches."

- (8) Passivization resulting in promotion to subject of 'Ascended' NP:

- a. Haksayng-i kay-eykey tali-lul mul-li-ess-ta.
 student-Nom dog-Dat leg-Acc bite-Pass-Past
 "The student was bitten on the leg by the dog."
 b. Ku namu-ka Mary-eykey kaci-lul cal-li-ess-ta.
 the tree-Nom Dat branch-Acc cut-Pass-Past
 "The tree was cut on the branches by Mary."

- (9) Plain Topicalization of 'Ascended' NP:

- a. *Haksayng-un* kay-ka tali-lul mul-ess-ta.
 student-Top dog-Nom leg-Acc bite
 "The dog bit *the student* on the leg."
 b. *Namu-nun* Mary-ka ku kaci-lul call-ass-ta.
 tree-Top Nom the branch-Acc cut
 "Mary cut *the tree* of its branches."

On the other hand, the original object that no longer functions as 'primary object' can not be promoted to the subject of the passive (as shown in (10)) and can not undergo Plain topicalization (as shown in (11)).³

- (10) a. **Tali-ka* kay-eykey haksayng-ul mul-li-ess-ta.
 leg-Nom dog-Dat student-Acc bite
 b. **Kaci-ka* Mary-eykey ku namu-lul cal-li-ess-ta.
 branch-Nom Dat the tree-Acc cut-Pass-Past
- (11) a. **Tali-nun* kay-ka Mary-lul mul-ess-ta.
 leg-Top dog-Nom Acc bite-Past-Dec
 "The dog bit Mary on *the leg*."
 b. **Kaci-nun* Mary-ka ku namu-lul call-ass-ta.
 branch-top Nom the tree-Acc cut-Past-Dec
 "Mary cut the tree of *its branches*."

The above syntactic behaviours suggest that the ascended possessor is realised as the direct object and the original object loses the status of the direct object. We assume that the possessor-ascension reflects a choice about which constituent of a possessor-possessed relation is to be encoded as a primary object. These alternations are apparently associated with subtle differences in meaning that are generally ignored in the syntactic research. Since the nominal designating the possessor is encoded as direct object bearing theme role, the nominal denoting the possessed must be given a different interpretation. O'Grady (1991:74) assumes that these elements have adverb-type locative interpretations (cf. the English translation 'on the leg' in (9)).

3. Apparent Constraints on PA: Whole/Part Relation or Inalienable Possessions

The constraints which allow possessor-ascension constructions seem to be variable across languages, such that, for example, the PA construction is limited to body-part possession in one language, and it is constrained by different factors in another (cf. Chappell and McGregor 1996b). It is difficult to formulate the possessor ascension process in purely syntactic terms

³ It was pointed out by the reviewer that example (11) could be acceptable in some situations, but it sounds still awkward to me.

(Chun 1986, Kim 1990 among others), and it is also not possible to treat the PA constructions either in terms of well-defined semantic roles or in terms of syntactic relation-changing processes as in Relational Grammar (see Shibatani 1994, O'Conner 1996).

As for syntactic constraints, Park (1985) notes two restrictions. The first is that if the possessor of the direct object is coreferential with the subject, then the possessor ascension is not possible as in (12) (Park 1985:341):

- (12) a. Insu-ka casin-uy sonthop-ul kkakk-ass-ta
 Nom self-Gen fingernail-Acc trim-Past-Dec
 "Insu trimmed his fingernails."
 b. *Insu-ka casin-ul sonthop-ul kkakk-ass-ta.
 Nom Acc Acc
 "Insu trimmed himself, his fingernails."

The second restriction is that if the possessive phrase is raised to be the direct object of the sentence, then the possessor ascension is not applicable to this derived direct object. Thus the sentence (13c) is ungrammatical because the possessor ascension has applied to the raised object (Park 1985:342).

- (13) a. Minu-ka chayk-uy phyoci-ka ccic-ki-ess-ta-ko
 Nom book-Gen cover-Nom tear-Pass-Past-
 sayngkakha-n-ta.
 Dec-Comp think-Pres-Dec
 "Minu thinks that the book's cover was torn."
 b. a. Minu-ka chayk-uy phyoci-lul ccic-ki-ess-ta-ko
 Nom book-Gen cover-Acc tear-Pass-Past-
 sayngkakha-n-ta.
 Dec-Comp think-Pres-Dec
 "Minu thinks the book's cover to be torn."
 c. *a. Minu-ka chayk-ul phyoci-lul ccic-ki-ess-ta-ko
 Nom book-Acc cover-Acc tear-Pass-Past-
 sayngkakha-n-ta.
 Dec-Comp think-Pres-Dec
 "Minu thinks the book, its cover to be torn." [sic]

As for semantic restrictions, Park (1985:342) notes that the possessor ascension is restricted to the possessive phrase in which certain semantic relation such as whole/part relation is held between two nominals. However,

as it turns out in the discussion, the possessor ascension can not be simply defined by whole/part relation since it takes place when whole/part relation is not held on the one hand, and under certain circumstances the possessor ascension does not take place even when whole/part relation is held.

At first sight, however, the possessor ascension seems to take place only when the possessor and the possessed hold the whole/part relation or the clause includes inalienable possessions, such as body part nouns. Consider the unacceptability of the following PA constructions in comparison with the acceptability of constructions (1)-(6):

- (14) a. John i Mary uy sakwa lul mek - ess - ta.
 Nom Poss apple Acc eat-Past-Dec
 "John ate Mary's apple."
 b. *John i Mary lul sakwa lul mek - ess - ta.
 Nom Acc apple Acc eat-Past-Dec
 "John ate Mary's apple."
- (15) a. John i Mary uy sensayng ul ttayli - ess -ta.
 Nom Poss teacher Acc hit-Past-Dec
 "John hit Mary's teacher."
 b. *John i Mary lul sensayng ul ttayli - ess -ta.
 Nom Acc teacher Acc hit-Past-Dec
 "John hit Mary's teacher."

Possessor ascension is not allowed in (14b) and (15b) because the relationship between *Mary* and *sakwa* 'apple' in (14b), *Mary* and *sensayng* 'teacher' in (15b), is not an inalienable one, or whole/part relation. The semantic restriction of inalienability seems to explain quite many PA constructions from various languages. For instance, consider the following Luganda data (Katamba 1993: 273):

- (16) a. a-li-menya okugulu kw-a Kapere
 s/he-Fut-break leg of Kapere
 "S/he will break Kapere's leg."
 b. a-li-menya Kapere okugulu
 s/he-Fut-break Kapere leg
 "S/he will break Kapere's leg."
- (17) a. a-li-menya omuggo gw-a Kapere
 s/he-Fut-break stick of Kapere
 "S/he will break Kapere's stick."

- b. *a-li-menya Kapere omuggo
 s/he-Fut-break Kapere stick
 “S/he will break Kapere’s stick.”
- (18) a. a-li-mu-menya okugulu
 s/he-Fut-him-break leg
 “S/he will break his leg.”
- b. *a-li-mu-menya omuti
 s/he-Fut-him-break tree
 “S/he will break his tree.”

In the above, we can see the semantic restrictions on possessor ascension. In Luganda, possessor ascension is subject to this semantic restriction: The possessor NP can be raised to object only if it represents an inalienable possession, e.g. a body-part. Hence, while *okugulu* ‘leg’ can be turned into an object, *omuggo* ‘stick’ cannot since it is not an integral part of Kapere’s body. Interestingly, in (18a) we see that the pronominal object marker *-mu-* referring to the possessor noun can be incorporated in the verb if possessed NP is an inalienable possession (e.g. *okugulu*). However, this is disallowed in (18b) where the possessed noun is not an inalienable possession (e.g. *omuti*) (Katamba 1993: 273–274).

Now, compare the Luganda case with the following English examples:

- (19) a. She slapped his face/She slapped him in the face.
 b. She hit his tree/*She hit him in the tree.⁴

PA is allowed when the construction includes body-part nouns as in (19a), whereas it is not allowed when non-body part nouns are involved as in (19b).

4. A Cognitive Account Interpretation: Semantico-Pragmatic Constraints on Possessor Ascension

We can thus say that in similar possessive constructions, body part nouns show different behaviour from non-body part nouns. This difference

⁴ Apparently, other constraints seem to be also at work, at least for English. For example, “*She hit him in the finger” is bad even though we do have a body-part. We can not pinpoint other constraints at the moment, but it seems that the oddity is related to the fact that “She hit his finger.” is not as natural as “She hit/slapped his face.”

can be explained cognitively: Body parts are physically attached to and contiguous with their possessors, and thus when a body part is affected by an action, its possessor is necessarily affected by that action as well.

PA is often impossible when the clause contains a non-action verb, i.e., one which has little or no effect on the object, since in this case there is little or no "affectedness." Consider the following examples in Korean.

(20) a. John i Mary uy moksoli lul tul - ess - ta.

Nom Poss voice Acc hear-Past-Dec

"John heard Mary's voice."

b. *John i Mary lul moksoli lul tul - ess - ta.

Nom Acc voice Acc hear-Past-Dec

"John heard Mary's voice."

(21) a. John i Mary uy tali lul po -ass - ta.

Nom Poss leg Acc see-Past-Dec

"John saw Mary's leg."

b. ?John i Mary lul tali lul po -ass - ta.

Nom Acc leg Acc see-Past-Dec

"John saw Mary's leg."

(20b) is unacceptable because the possessor is not physically affected at all by the action of hearing. In comparison with the action of hearing, (21b) is not totally unacceptable but sounds awkward because the action of seeing also hardly affects the object. Given that the affectedness of the possessor in the case of body parts allows the possessor to be interpreted as a direct object, when the clause in question contains a non-action verb like "hear" or "see," it is expected that PA is often not permitted.⁵ The following examples from Fox (1981:327) illustrate the same situations in Dutch and English:

(22) Dutch: a. Ik schudde hem de hand

I shook him the hand

"I shook his hand."

b. *Ik zag hem de hand

I saw him the hand

"I saw his hand."

⁵ We owe this claim to Fox (1981), who used English and Dutch examples given in (22-23) to make exactly the same claim. Hyman (1977) also points to differences in the acceptability of PA constructions as a function of the verb varies.

- (23) a. I hit her on the leg.
 b. *I saw her on the leg.

The possessor is physically affected by the action of shaking his/her hand as in (22a), hitting his/her leg as in (23a), whereas the possessor is not physically affected by the action of seeing as in (22b) and (23b). As a consequence, The possessor ascension is not allowed in (22b) and (23b).

Possessor ascension may also be restricted by the nature of the possessor, that is, whether it is animate or inanimate (Hyman 1977 : 106). Following Hyman (1977), Fox (1981) also argues, for instance, that since the possessor-possession relationship with inanimate entities is not as contiguous as with animate entities, inanimate possessors are regarded by humans as less affectable than animate possessors. Thus, we expect that Possessor ascension would not occur as frequently with inanimate possessors as with their animate counterparts. Consider the following examples (Fox 1981 : 328):

- (24) a. ?I hit the tree on the branch.
 b. *I painted the house on the door.

However, it seems to me that the difference between animate and inanimate entities as possessors is not a difference in contiguity – the branch of the tree is just as contiguous with the tree as my hand is with me –, but a difference in prototypicality with respect to their possessor status. The prototypical possessor tends to be human or animate entities whereas the inanimate entities are not normally interpreted as a typical possessor. We would expect that there are cross-linguistic variations in terms of prototype effects.

In some languages, for instance, PA is permitted even with inanimate possessors. For example, in language like Mayali (a Gunwinyguan (non-Pama-Nyungan) language of North Western Australia), the body part incorporated constructions is not limited to parts of animates, but extends to parts of trees and plants as well (Evans 1996 : 92). This is also the case in Korean:

- (25) a. John i namu uy kaci lul cal - ass - ta.
 Nom tree Poss branch Acc cut-Past-Dec
 ‘John cut the tree’s branch.’

- b. John i namu lul kaci lul cal - ass - ta.
 Nom tree Acc branch Acc cut-Past-Dec
 "John cut the tree on the branch."

- (26) a. John i cip uy pyek ul hemul - ess - ta.
 Nom house Poss wall Acc demolish-Past-Dec
 "John demolished the house's wall."

- b. John i cip ul pyek ul hemul - ess - ta.
 Nom house Acc wall Acc demolish-Past-Dec
 "John demolished the house on the wall."

In Korean, possessor ascension is also allowed even with inanimate possessor like *cip* 'house' as in (26). Korean data is rather exceptional in allowing inanimate possessor ascension considering that cross-linguistically possessor ascension prefers animate nouns as the ascended objects.

As the notion of affectedness plays an important role in PA, the possessor of an inalienably possessed object, typically a body-part, is the most likely target for the PA construction. This was easily explained with the notion of affectedness. Namely, when a body-part is affected in an event, its possessor is also affected by the transitivity effect.

However, it should be noted here that simply describing the relationship between the possessor and the possessee in PA construction as inalienable possession or body-part is not specific enough to characterise the possible condition in which PA constructions can occur in Korean at least. The semantic range of this construction is wider than what we would normally understand by 'body parts,' or even by 'part-whole' relations. It includes nouns of 'personal representation' (Chappell-McGregor 1996) such as names as in (27), photos as in (28).

- (27) a. pancang-i Suni-uy ilum-ul cek-ess-ta.
 class leader-Nom Suni-Poss name-Acc write down-Past-Dec
 "The class leader wrote down Suni's name."

- b. pancang-i Suni-lul ilum-ul cek-ess-ta.
 class leader-Nom Suni-Acc name-Acc write down-Past-Dec
 "The class leader wrote down Suni's name."

- (28) a. yenghwa kamtok-i Yongsu-uy sacin-ul ccik-ess-ta.
 movie director-Nom Yongsu-Poss photo-Acc imprint-Past-Dec
 "The movie director took a picture of Yongsu."

- b. yenghwa kamtok-i Yongsu-lul sacin-ul ccik-ess-ta.
 movie director-Nom Yongsu-Acc photo-Acc imprint-Past-Dec
 "The movie director took a picture of Yongsu."

These examples clearly illustrate that the term body part is too narrow, as it would fail to include non-body part like names, photos, etc. Many linguists have noted that the distinction between “inalienable” and “alienable” is vague as well as complex and cross-linguistically variable – body parts are usually treated as inalienable –, but so are other things; and linguists have discussed a hypothetical hierarchy from inalienable to alienable possession, with different languages adopting different cut-off points, as in Chappell & McGregor (1996), Nichols (1988), and Haiman (1985), among others.

The constraint of whole/part relation or inalienable possession does not accommodate the fact that PA can take place when the clause includes not only body-part nouns but also non-body part nouns. Consider the following examples:

- (29) a. Suni-ka Yongsu-uy os-ul ccic-ess-ta.
 Nom Poss clothes-Acc tear-Past-Dec
 “Suni tore off Yongsu’s clothes.”
 b. Suni-ka Yongsu-lul os-ul ccic-ess-ta.
 Nom Acc clothes-Acc tear-Past-Dec
 “Suni tore the clothes off of Yongsu.”

The most important thing to note here is that the PA process in (29) is not always possible. (29b) is possible only when *Yongsu* is actually wearing the clothes, and not when his clothes are hanging in the closet. The relevant factor here, then, is not really the absolute distinction between inalienable (i.e. body-part) possession and alienable possession, as is often assumed, but is rather whether or not the possessor physically contiguous with the possessed object. Similarly, the following Korean PA construction is possible only when ‘John’ was wearing the shoe when the described events happened. If John’s shoe was left in the living room or somewhere, and Mary stepped on the shoe without John’s presence, it is not possible to utter the sentence (30b).

- (30) a. Mary-ka John-uy sinpal-ul palp-ass-ta.
 Nom Gen shoe-Acc step on-Past-Dec
 “Mary stepped on John’s shoe.”
 b. Mary-ka John-ul sinpal-ul palp-ass-ta.
 Nom Acc shoe-Acc step on-Past-Dec
 “Mary stepped on John on his shoe.”

Thus, the notion of contiguity plays a crucial role in explaining PA constructions in Korean. It was also shown in Fox (1981) and Shibatani (1994) that the notion of contiguity is a crucial factor to describe PA process in other languages. Our explanation that crucially based on the notion of contiguity, in fact, trivializes the notion of inalienability in the possessor ascension constructions, and other relevant constructions, such as the “retained-object passive construction,” which will be discussed in the next section.

On the other hand, our approach predicts that when the possessor is contiguous with the possessed object, the possessor of an alienable object could be “promoted,” which can not be properly described with the constraint of whole/part relation. The following example from Newari (Shibatani 1994: 471) shows that the possessor of an alienable object can be more readily “promoted,” in fact, than the person whose kin is involved in the event.

(31) a. Ji dhaaten chon syaa.

I really head hurt

“I’m really hurt in the head.”

(cf. a’. Ji-gu chon dhaaten syaa. “My head really hurt.”)

b. Ji dhaaten wosa phohar.

I really clothes dirty

“I am really dirty-clothed”

(cf. b’. Ji-gu wosa dhaaten phohar. “My clothes are really dirty.”)

c. *Ji baa dhani.

I father rich

(cf. c’. Ji-mi baa dhani. “My father is rich.”)

It is natural in (31a) that the possessor is ascended to the subject as the possessed object ‘head’ is an inalienable possession. If you compare (31b) and (31c), the PA takes place in (b) where the possessed object is clothes since the possessor is contiguous with the possessed, whereas the PA is not possible in (c) where we may expect PA since the relationship between ‘I’ and ‘father’ is kinship relation that is generally high in possession hierarchy. The cognitive relation between ‘I’ and ‘clothes’ in (b) is thought to be more contiguous than one between ‘I’ and ‘father’ in (c). Shibatani (1994: 471) notes that the person to be promoted in the event must be actually wearing the clothes in question; PA is difficult or impossible when the clothes are hanging in the closet.

At this stage, the question can be raised whether the examples given

before which supposedly conformed with the inalienability constraint can be accounted for in terms of contiguity. The answer is in support of the contiguity factor. Example (17), for instance, becomes grammatical if the stick is assumed to be in Kapere's hand and therefore contiguous. However, not all the possessor of an alienable object can be easily promoted when the possessor is contiguous with the possessed. Examples such as (14b) are still not grammatical even in a context where Mary is holding the apple.

- (14b) *John i Mary lul sakwa lul mek/mul - ess - ta.
 Nom Acc apple Acc eat/bite-Past-Dec
 “*John ate/bit Mary in the apple.”

It is not clear though why, if it is solely contiguity that is critical, it is not, in general, possible to make PA construction when the possessor is holding or otherwise “attached to” an alienable possession such as an apple, a book, or a bracelet, and so is contiguous with it. Imagine, for instance in (14b), Mary holding the apple as John comes up and bites it. It is not possible to utter PA construction like (14b) in the situation above, whereas Korean speakers would find the following example (14b') to be much more acceptable than (14b) when Mary is holding an apple as a dog comes up intending to bite Mary's hand or something:

- (14b') ?Kay ka Mary lul sakwa lul mul-ess-ta.
 dog Nom Acc apple Acc bite-Past-Dec
 “?The dog bit Mary in the apple.”

It seems here that the “affectedness” factor plays a role as well as “contiguity.” Here the difference seems to be that the focus is laid on whether Mary is affected at all by dog's biting whereas in (14b) Mary seems not to be affected by John's eating Mary's apple. Also consider the contrast in the following examples⁶:

- (32) a. ?*He tapped me on the bracelet.
 b. He tapped me on the left rear bumper [to describe a car accident].

English speakers find (32a) worse than (32b) even though I am more contiguous with (or attached to) my bracelet than with my bumper. Presumably this has something to do with speakers' judgements about how

⁶ I am grateful to an anonymous reader for this English examples.

“affected” a possessor is by an action on a possession-actions on body parts and clothing worn on the body are apparently construed as affecting the possessor more than actions on other “contiguous” possessions. Here we can see that the notion of “contiguity” must be supplemented by the notion of “affectedness,” which in turn is quite subjective.

Compare also, on the contrary to (14b), the possible acceptability of (15b) in a context where Mary loves her teacher, being close to teacher psychologically, and Mary is affected emotionally by John’s hitting her teacher even though Mary herself is not beaten physically/directly.

- (15b) ?John i Mary lul sensayng ul ttayli - ess -ta.
 Nom Acc teacher Acc hit-Past-Dec
 “John hit Mary’s teacher.”

The acceptability of the following example, in comparison with (15b), becomes more plausible where Mary’s only son is hit by John, and Mary is thought to be affected by that as a consequence. The psychological distance between Mary and her only son is even closer than Mary and her teacher.

- (15b’) John i Mary lul oyatul ul ttayli - ess -ta.
 Nom Acc only-son Acc hit-Past-Dec
 “John hit Mary’s only son.”

The concept of contiguity thus can be better understood as a cognitive/psychological one, not as a physical or material contact or distance. In other words, contiguity cannot be defined in terms of very close physical proximity, but must be “construed” on a language-specific basis so as to include or exclude e.g. a name or close kin relationship. The contiguity in the case of (15b’) implies that the perception of the contiguity in Korean could be different from other languages. It should thus be noted that the delimitation of the concept of contiguity may vary depending on speech community. The different speech community may have different view as to whether to consider name, kinship, or certain other objects as belonging to the domain of contiguity or ‘personal representation.’

Before proceeding to next section, let us note the semantic differences between the possessive possessor construction and the possessor ascension construction. Consider the following example:

- (33) a. Yongsu-ka Suni-uy os-ul manci-ess-ta.
 Nom Poss clothes-Acc touch-Past-Dec
 “Yongsu touched Suni’s clothes.”

- b. Yongsu-ka Suni-lul os-ul manci-ess-ta.
 Nom Acc clothes-Acc touch-Past-Dec
 "Yongsu touched Suni on the clothes."

Within the formal approaches including transformational paradigm, possessor ascension is based on the assumption that (33a) and (33b) have the same meaning. The functionalists (Chappell and McGregor 1996b among others) argue, however, that such an assumption is wrong. First of all, in (33b) the action is represented as more intimately and directly affecting the person in (33a). Secondly, the possession is represented in (33a) as though it were disembodied from the person, that is, as though the clothes were not attached to the person. Furthermore, in (33b), the action is viewed as being directed at the person whereas in (33a) the action is viewed as being directed at the clothes to the exclusion of the person (Heine 1997).

5. The Constraint of Contiguity on Other Types of Constructions

The constraint of contiguity also applies to the "retained-object passive constructions" (Kim 1994) in Korean. The relationship between the subject and the retained-object can be more accurately described when we consider the constraint of contiguity. It is assumed that the subject and the retained-object must have a possessive relationship in order to allow a retained-object passive construction. Yeon (1991) classifies the possessive relationship into inalienable possession, which refers to body parts, and alienable possession, in order to draw a distinction between the retained-object passive constructions in Korean and Chinese. While in Chinese, only an inalienable possessive relation is allowed, as shown in Chappell (1986), an alienable possession is also allowed in Korean, as in the following example (Yeon 1991: 347).

- (34) cangkwn-i pwha-eykey mal-koppi-lul cap-hi-ess-ta.
 general-Nom subordinate-Dat horse-bridle-Acc hold-Pass-Past-Dec
 "The general was subjected to the subordinate holding the bridle of his horse."

However, Kim (1994:338) noted that simply describing the relationship between the subject and the retained-object in (34) as alienable possession is not specific enough. For example, if the general in (34) is a few steps

away from his horse, then the retained-object passive sentence can not be achieved. Similarly, the sentence in (35) can be possible only when *Yongsu* is actually wearing his shirt, and not when his shirt is hanging in the closet.

- (35) Yongsu-ka Suni-eykey somay-lul cap-hi-ess-ta.
 Nom Dat sleeve-Acc hold-Pass-Past-Dec
 "Yongsu had his sleeve grabbed by Mary."

It is generally accepted that retained-object passive constructions as in (34) and (35) are output of possessor ascension constructions which have the double accusative NP. Thus, we can say that (34) and (35) are derived from (34') and (35') respectively.

- (34') pwuha-ka cangkwn-ul mal-koppi-lul cap-ess-ta.
 subordinate-Nom general-Acc horse-bridle-Acc hold-Past-Dec
 "The subordinate grabbed the bridle of general's horse."

- (35') Suni-ka Yongsu-lul somay-lul cap-ess-ta.
 Nom Acc sleeve-Acc hold-Past-Dec
 "Suni grabbed Yongsu's sleeve."

Thus, the notion of contiguity is more appropriate than the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession to characterize more accurately the relationship between the subject and the retained object in Korean.

However, the acceptability judgement differs between possessor ascension constructions and retained-object constructions even though same degree of contiguity is maintained. It is perhaps worth noting that not all retained-object passive constructions have the double accusative construction as their active counterpart as shown in (36)

- (36) a. John-i Mary-eykey ilki-lul ilk-hi-ess-ta.
 Nom Dat diary-Acc read-Pass-Past-Dec
 "John had his diary read by Mary."
 b. Mary-ka John-uy / *ul ilki-lul ilk-ess-ta.
 Nom Poss / *Acc diary-Acc read-Past-Dec
 "Mary read John's diary."

As Kim (1994) points out, the variation in acceptability observed in (36) suggests that the possessor ascension construction has to have a stricter contiguity relationship between the two accusative NPs than the contiguity relationship allowed in the retained-object passive construction.

6. Conclusion

To formulate the possessor ascension process in purely syntactic terms or semantic roles is not possible. For instance, simply describing the constraint of possessor ascension process in the following example (repeated from (29)) as any kind of possession whatsoever is not specific enough to characterise the possible condition in which PA can actually occur.

- (29) a. Suni-ka Yongsu-uy os-ul ccic-ess-ta. →
 b. Suni-ka Yongsu-lul os-ul ccic-ess-ta.

The PA process is not always possible even with same sentence. (29b) is possible only when *Yongsu* is actually wearing the clothes, and not when his clothes are hanging in the closet or on the wall. Here we need to incorporate semantico-pragmatic explanations to accommodate more proper account on PA constructions. Many different proposals to account for the case-marking patterns in PA constructions in Korean so far (Park 1985, Chun 1986, Kim, Y. 1990, O'Grady 1991 among others) do not concern about the fact that the PA process is not always possible even with same sentence as these proposals mainly concern about the mechanism of case agreement or case assignment within particular theoretical framework. Proper characterization of PA process can not be satisfactorily described without pragmatic/cognitive considerations.

It was pointed out in the relevant literature that the possessor of an inalienably possessed object, typically a body-part, is the most preferred target for the possessor ascension construction. We have shown with relevant data that in similar possessive constructions, body part nouns show different behaviour from non-body part nouns. This difference can be explained as follows: Body parts are physically attached to and contiguous with their possessors, and thus when a body part is affected in an event, its possessor is necessarily affected by the transitivity effect as well. Given that the affectedness of the possessor in the case of body parts allows the possessor to be interpreted as a direct object, possessor ascension is often not permitted when the clause in question contains a non-action verb, which was proved with relevant data.

However, the PA can take place when the clause includes not only body part nouns but also non-body part nouns. We have therefore investigated pragmatic factors controlling the possessor ascension. The crucial factor in PA is not really the absolute (or semantic) inalienable relation between the

possessor and the possessed as is often assumed, but is rather whether or not the possessor is cognitively contiguous with the possessed object in an event, and the possessor is thought to be affected by the event as a consequence. The constraints of affectedness and contiguity, contrasting with inalienable possession, explains more accurately the possessor ascension. Furthermore, it was noted that the concept of contiguity better be understood as a cognitive/psychological one not as a physical contact or distance while we were discussing the data in (15b) and (15b').

This constraint also applies to the retained-object passive constructions in Korean. The relationship between the subject and the retained-object can be more accurately described by this constraint. It is noted that simply describing the relationship between the subject and the retained-object as inalienable possession is not specific enough to describe the actual possible situation that a retained-object passive construction depicts.

We have shown that the notion of affectedness and contiguity is more appropriate than the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession to characterize more accurately the relationship between the possessor and the possessee in possessor ascension constructions on the one hand and the subject and the retained object in retained-object passive constructions on the other.

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